

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-53. (cancelled)

54. (new) A coupling closure for substantially environmentally-sealed, reversible closure of containers or hose elements, comprising:

5 at least one first flexible band with at least one first closure element on its inner side;

at least one second flexible band with at least one second closure element on its inner side that is complementary to the first closure element and enables a reversible, sealed closure; and

10 a top side of the first band comprising at least one third closure element and a top side of the second band comprising at least one fourth closure element.

15 55. (new) A coupling closure of claim 54 wherein the first and second bands are substantially equal in length and the first and second bands are connected with one another at respective end segments to form a closed circumference.

56. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 54 wherein at least one fifth closure element is provided on at least one outer side of the first or second band.

20 57. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 54 wherein a closure cover is provided comprising: at least one cover closure element that is complementary to the third or fourth closure elements of the top side of the first or second bands, the cover closure element being connectible with the third or fourth closure elements to form a temporary covering of a connection 25 slit of the first and second bands when the inner sides of first and second bands are connected with one another via an interaction of the first and second closure elements.

58. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 57 wherein the closure cover is connected with the first or second bands.

59. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 57 wherein the closure cover comprises at least one control grip.

5 60. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 54 wherein the first or second bands comprises at least one control grip.

61. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 54 wherein a flexible bag or hose has an opening edge connected with the first and second bands.

10 62. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 54 wherein at least the inner side or the top side of the first or second bands comprises a bonding or adhesive layer.

63. (new) A docking device for filling or refilling of bulk material, comprising:

15 first and second coupling closures, each of the coupling closures comprising:

at least one first flexible band with at least one first closure element on its inner side,

20 at least one second flexible band with at least one second closure element on its inner side that is complementary to the first closure element and enables a reversible, sealed closure;

a top side of the first band comprising at least one third closure element and a top side of the second band comprising at least one fourth closure element; and

25 the third and fourth closure elements of the top sides of first and second bands of the first coupling closure are complementary to the third and

fourth closure elements of the top sides of the first and second bands of the second coupling closure so that the first and second bands of the first and second coupling closures are reversibly connectible with one another.

64. (new) A docking device of claim 63 wherein the first and second coupling closures are for substantially environmentally-sealed reversible closure of containers or hose elements, the first and second bands of the first and second coupling closures are substantially equal in length, and a first and second bands are connected with one another with respective end segments.

65. (new) A docking device according to claim 63 wherein at least one fifth closure element is provided on at least one outer side of the first or second band of the first or second coupling closure, the fifth closure element being complementary to a cover closure element of a closure cover of the first or second coupling closure.

66. (new) A docking device according to claim 65 wherein the closure cover of the first coupling closure is reversibly connectible with at least one cover closure element of the second coupling closure, and the closure cover of the second coupling closure is reversibly connectible with at least one cover closure element of the first coupling closure when the third and fourth closure elements of first and second coupling closure are connected with one another.

67. (new) A docking device according to claim 63 wherein the first or second coupling closures are connectible with a flexible container, flexible hose, or hose element.

68. (new) A docking device according to claim 63 wherein the first and the second coupling closures are substantially identical.

69. (new) A coupling closure for substantially environmentally-sealed, reversible closure of containers or hose elements, comprising:

a plurality of frame bands and articulation devices;

immediately adjacent frame bands being connected with one another via respectively at least one articulation device between the immediately adjacent frame bands to form a circumferential folding frame; and

5 inner sides of at least two adjacent or opposing frame bands being foldable one atop the other to form a closure.

70. (new) A coupling closure of claim 69 wherein said containers or hose elements are flexible, and said frame bands are substantially rigid.

71. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein the folding frame comprises x frame bands and x articulation devices, where
10 x = (2) (n) and n is a natural number greater than or equal to 2.

72. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein the articulation devices represent hinges, film hinges or elastic materials.

73. (new) A coupling according to claim 69 wherein the folding frame comprises: six frame bands and six articulation devices; a first pair of adjacent frame bands being connected via a first of the articulation devices; a second pair of adjacent frame bands being connected via a second of the articulation devices; and a third pair of frame bands that are not adjacent or are not directly connected via an articulation device; a sum of a length of one frame band of the first pair and a length of one frame band of the second pair
20 being not greater than a length of one frame band of the third pair of frame bands.

74. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 73 wherein an inner side of one of the frame bands of the first pair and an inner side of one of the frame bands of the second pair are both turned towards an inner side of
25 one of the frame bands of the third pair, and an inner side of the other frame band of the first pair and an inner side of the other frame band of the second pair are both turned towards an inner side of the other frame band of the third pair to form a sealed closure slit.

75. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein in a region of at least one circumference edge, the folding frame comprises a substantially circumferential sealing lip extending inwards over the edge.

76. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 73 wherein at least 5 one spacer is provided on an outer side of one of the frame bands of the first and or second pair of frame bands.

77. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein inner 10 sides of the frame bands comprise first and second closure rails at least in sections for environmentally-sealed closure; a total length of the first closure rail substantially corresponding to a total length of the second closure rail; and the first and second closure rails or sections thereof are arranged on inner sides of the frame bands such that they form an environmentally-sealed closure slit folded onto one another.

78. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein first or 15 second closure rails extend on inner sides of the articulation devices.

79. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 77 wherein the first closure rail represents a groove and the second closure rail represents a tongue complementary to the groove.

80. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 77 wherein at least 20 one first closure rail is present at least in sections on an inner side of adjacent first and second frame bands, and at least one second closure rail is present at least in sections on an inner side of adjacent third and fourth frame bands.

81. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein at least two control grips are applied on non-adjacent frame bands.

25 82. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 81 wherein at least one of the control grips possesses at least one centering or arresting unit for interaction with a corresponding coupling closure to form a docking device.

83. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein at least the folding frame is designed as one piece.

84. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein at least one of the frame bands exhibit on a top side at least one first closure element
5 at least in sections.

85. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 84 wherein the first closure element represents a groove or tongue.

86. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 84 wherein at least one second closure element is provided on an outer side of at least one frame
10 band.

87. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 86 further comprising at least one closure cover with at least one third closure element that is substantially complementary to the first closure element or at least one fourth closure element that is substantially complementary to the second
15 closure element, such that the closure cover covers a closure slit of the folding frame at least in sections given a closed coupling closure.

88. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 87 wherein the closure cover is connected at least in sections with a frame band via a hinge, a film hinge, or a flexible connection element.

20 89. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 87 wherein the closure cover is provided with at least one control or transport grip.

90. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein a flexible container, a flexible hose, or a flexible hose element is connected in sealed fashion with the frame bands or the articulation devices.

25 91. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein at least an inner side or a top side of at least one frame band comprises a bonding or adhesive layer at least in sections.

92. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 further comprising at least one first arresting element present on an inner side of at least one frame band and at least one first arresting opening present in an inner side of at least one frame band, the first arresting element being engageable in the first arresting opening upon closure of the folding frame.

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93. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 further comprising at least one handle on an outer side of at least two of the frame bands.

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94. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 93 wherein the handle comprises: at least one retention band attached on an outer side of a frame band, said retention band comprising at least one second arresting opening; at least one first grip element; at least one second grip element; at least one first and at least one second film hinge; the first grip element being connected with the retention band via the first film hinge and the second grip element being connected with the first grip element via the second film hinge; and the second grip element having at least one second arresting element that corresponds to the second arresting opening; the second grip element being foldable onto the first grip element; and the second arresting element being engageable in the second arresting opening.

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95. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein at least one articulation, adjacent frame bands, or their extension in an articulation from an angle.

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96. (new) A coupling closure according to claim 69 wherein at least one notch at least along a section on an inner side of at least one of the articulations is provided.

97. (new) A docking device for filling or refilling of bulk material, comprising:

first and second coupling closures, said first and second coupling closures each respectively forming a first circumferential folding frame and a second circumferential folding frame, each frame comprising

a plurality of frame bands and articulation devices,

5 immediately adjacent frame bands being connected with one another via respectively at least one articulation device between the immediately adjacent frame bands to form said first or second circumferential folding frame, and

10 inner sides of at least two adjacent or opposing frame bands being foldable one top of the other to form a closure; and

the first and second coupling closures substantially coinciding in number, length and arrangement of their frame bands, and the first and second folding frames being connectible with one another.

98. (new) A docking device of claim 97 wherein the coupling 15 closures each provide a substantially environmentally-sealed, reversible closure for flexible containers or hose elements and wherein said frame bands are substantially rigid.

99. (new) A docking device according to claim 97 wherein a first closure element of a top side of the frame bands of the first coupling closure is 20 complementary to a first closure element of a top side of the frame bands of the second coupling closure, such that the first and second coupling closures are reversibly connected.

100. (new) A docking device according to claim 97 wherein the first folding frame comprises at least one sealing lip that rests or can be placed in 25 a sealing manner on an edge or on the sealing lip of the second folding frame.

101. (new) A docking device according to claim 99 wherein at least one second closure element is provided on an outer side of at least one frame band of the first or second coupling closures, the second closure element

being complementary to the fourth closure element or a second arresting element of a closure cover.

5 102. (new) A docking device according to claim 97 wherein a flexible container, a hose, or a hose element is substantially connected in environmentally-sealed fashion with the first or second coupling closure.

103. (new) A flexible container system, comprising:

a flexible container; and

10 a coupling closure connected to said flexible container, said coupling closure comprising at least one first flexible band with at least one first closure element and its inner side, at least one second flexible band with at least one second closure element on its inner side which is complementary to the first closure element and enables a reversible, sealed closure, and a top side of the first band comprising at least one third closure element and a top side of the second band comprising at least one fourth closure element.

15 104. (new) A flexible container system according to claim 103 wherein at least one extraction device being connectible with the flexible container.

105. (new) A transport device, comprising:

a hose; and

20 a coupling closure for substantially environmentally-sealed reversible closure of said hose, said coupling closure comprising

at least one first flexible band and at least one first closure element on its inner side,

25 at least one second flexible band with at least one second closure element on its inner side that is complementary to the

first closure element and enables a reversible, sealed closure, and

5 a top side of the first band comprising at least one third closure element and at a top side of the second band comprising at least one first closure element.

106. (new) A method for production of a coupling closure, comprising the steps of:

creating articulation devices of a rubber-elastic material or a thermo-plastic elastomer by injection-molding;

10 creating frame bands of a thermo-plastic or a duroplastic material having a sealing lip by injection-molding;

15 connecting immediately adjacent frame bands with one another via respective articulation devices to form a circumferential folding frame, with inner sides of at least two adjacent opposing frame bands being foldable one on top of the other to a closure.

107. (new) A method for production of a coupling closure according to claim 106 wherein a single injection mold is employed in one stage, or with at least two injection molds in at least two stages.

108. (new) A method for production of a coupling closure according 20 to claim 106 wherein the articulations are sprued on adjacent frame bands, or one or more frame bands are sprued on adjacent articulations.

109. (new) A method for filling, refilling, or emptying of flexible containers, comprising the steps:

25 providing a docking device comprising first and second coupling closures, each of the first and second coupling closures comprising at least one flexible band with at least one first closure element on its inner side, at least one second flexible band with at least one second closure element on its

inner side that is complementary to the first closure element and enables a reversible, seal closure, and a top side of the first band comprising at least one third closure element and a top side of the second band comprising at least one fourth closure element, and wherein the third and fourth closure elements of the top sides of the first and second bands of the first coupling closure are complementary to the third and fourth closure elements with the top sides with the first and second bands of the second coupling closure so that the first and second bands of the first and second coupling closures are reversibly connectible with one another;

10 connecting a first flexible container with a second flexible container with the first and second coupling closures of said docking device;

opening the first and second coupling closures while maintaining the docking device environmentally-sealed;

15 transporting bulk material from the first container into the second container or vice versa;

closing the first and second coupling closures in an environmentally-sealed manner while maintaining the docking device environmentally-sealed; and

20 separating the first coupling closure connected to the first container and the second coupling closure connected to the second container from one another upon decoupling of the docking device.

110. (new) A method for filling, refilling, or emptying of flexible containers, comprising the steps of:

25 providing a docking device comprising first and second coupling closures, said first and second coupling closures each respectively forming a first circumferential folding frame and a second circumferential folding frame, each frame comprising a plurality of frame bands and articulation devices, immediately adjacent frame bands being connected with one another via

respectively at least one articulation device between the immediately adjacent frame bands to form said first or second circumferential folding frame, and the inner sides of at least two adjacent opposing frame bands foldable on top of the other to form a closure;

5 connecting a first flexible container with a second flexible container by use of said first and second folding frames of said docking device;

opening the first and second folding frames while maintaining the docking device environmentally-sealed;

10 transporting bulk material from the first container into the second container or vice versa;

closing the first and second folding frames in an environmentally-sealed manner while maintaining said docking device environmentally-sealed, and

15 separating the first folding frame connected to the first container and the second folding frame connected to the second container from one another upon decoupling of the docking device.